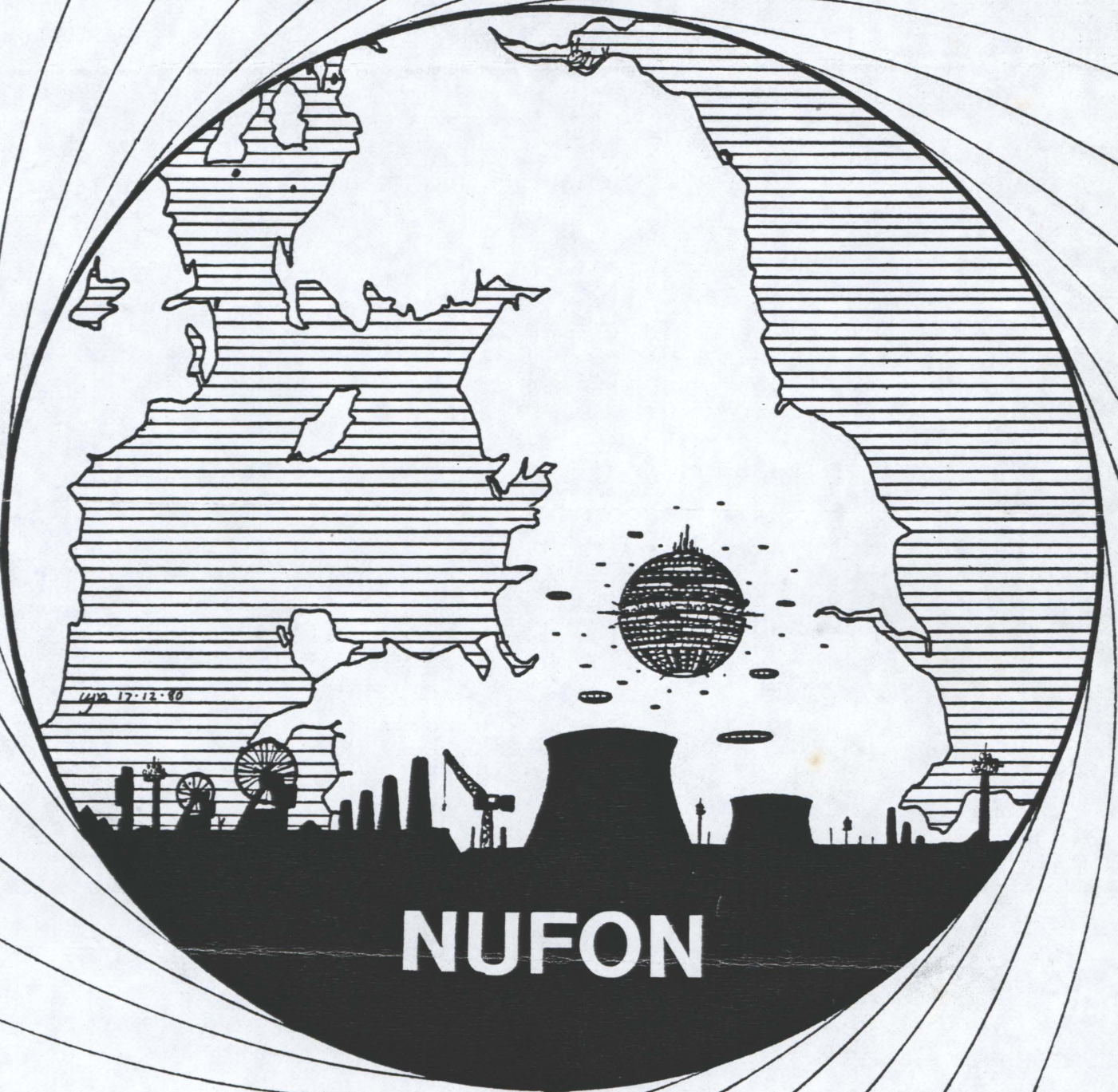


NORTHERN UFO NEWS

81



NORTHERN UFO NEWS is published monthly (in series with NORTHERN UFOLOGY)
by the Northern UFO Network (NUFON) Editorial Address :-

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1981 Subscription rate £3.60 for 12 issues

FEBRUARY 1981

ISSUE 81

EDITORIAL: Who said that? ... Not Me!

"Ufology is trying to become a science. To do that it must avoid remaining either a cult or a belief. It must stand upon empirical evidence and not fall by its fantasies." That was me... writing at the end of an article for the MIGAP house journal "Mersey News". The article arose from an incident which throws up some interesting questions of ufological ethics.

On December 13 I was invited as guest speaker to a meeting arranged by MIGAP in Liverpool. The intention was that the four Merseyside groups should meet to discuss closer local investigation liaison. Unbeknowns to myself a journalist was also invited and I was steered away to a drafty staircase for an interview. Readers will be well aware that I am not the greatest advocate of publicity for our subject but when placed on a spot like this one has to do one's best. We had a long chat in which I served to state the case for serious ufology and then I promptly forgot all about it. Until, some days later, a MIGAP member read me the article (as it was published in the LIVERPOOL ECHO) and advised me that some members were a "bit peeved" (as later demonstrated by their writings in "Mersey News").

The source of their annoyance was threefold. Firstly, they did not like my attempt to "play down" the importance of the subject or the understressing of possible exotic answers. Secondly, they were not keen on my discourse about the use of psychology and sociology in the context of UFO reports, describing them as fruitful grounds for productive exploration. This was despite my clear statement that I was talking here about some UFO cases only (in fact I made clear to the journalist I was talking about CE4 cases); and I added that I thought exploration of these topics might well lead to new scientific revelations in the fields. Most importantly, however, members were (not surprisingly) up in arms about the following quote (which is a typical media translation of the much longer and less emotive description I gave them; although in essence it says the same thing) "Most sightings are rubbish. However sincere the people are who make them. For investigators trying to find a genuine UFO is like looking for a needle in a haystack". A bit poetic (although rather similar to the dedication I wrote for Allen Hynek on a book recently, which he apparently applauded); and dramatised (as usual) by the media. But I would certainly stand by the spirit of what I am supposed to have said.

This is what a couple of MIGAP members thought of this... "JR states all reports of UFO sightings are rubbish no matter how sincere the witness is... one might wonder if she is wasting her time in pursuit of a worthless profession..." AND "How on earth anyone in the field of ufology can say all reports of UFO sightings are rubbish... is beyond me. What are you trying to do, put MIGAP into liquidation? I've spent a couple of hundred pounds in the past 12 months and I thought to myself, is it a waste of time? Will people continue to supply me with information? I think you have reduced the odds dramatically..."

Of course not even the ECHO claim I said all UFOs were rubbish, there is a big difference between all and most. It's rather like the story, reminded to me by a more sympathetic MIGAP member, of the army given the order "The enemy is growing. A long-toothed advance!" transferred along a line of men to the end as "The enemy is going along to a dance" (!)

Of course I was not trying to liquify ufologists, and of course I respect their endeavours and financial involvement. Without them we would get nowhere. I respect too why MIGAP should get angry here (I expect most UFO groups would react in the same way) Of course I did not say exactly what I am supposed to have said, though that is not an excuse. But important questions are raised. Since 90% of reports are rubbish (in the sense of valuable data for unknown phenomena) is it wrong to say so? Is it wrong to tell the truth? Is it wrong to attempt to make ufology a serious, respectable subject by discussing psychological and sociological theories? (That does not mean closing one's mind to other possibilities) Does it matter if a few people stop reporting sightings which, in the main, are aircraft or stars or satellites anyway? Don't we already have enough good data to work out the answers from, if more people started thinking about it? Just where should our priorities lie?

I do not know the answers to these questions, although I have my views. I am sure you have yours too and we would like to hear them. So send them in! As for me, I think I am in the profession I want to be in because I have a passion for finding the truth (whatever that is). This requires many qualities, including honesty. It is a fact that 90% of UFO reports are not UFOs. We should never forget

Come on, Jenny. This pained surprise every time you get your fingers burned by the media is wearing a bit thin. You've been around. The media does not exist as a propaganda shop for minority interests. It exists to inform and to entertain (or - in Yorkshire TVs case to make money - by informing, occasionally, and entertaining). So when TV makes a UFO programme it's bound to come out either like HORIZON (informing, but reflecting, quite properly, the establishment science view) or like MYSTERIOUS WORLD.

Actually, as entertainment I thought MYSTERIOUS WORLD very good, presenting facts in an entertaining way nicely balanced by Arthur Clarke's healthy scepticism. The Tunguska programme was particularly good - with research infinitely better than in most books on the subject. And the Lake Monsters programme set me thinking critically about the reliability of witnesses.

But this is not a defense of Yorkshire TV - who still have it coming to them for other crimes against humanity! I admit to being an admirer of ACC and regard an attack on him as an attack on myself. I find in his writings a beautiful and much cherished vision for the future; in which the myths which tear man apart take second place to common humanity, where reason is king and where the individual human being has more value than any dogma, political theory or religion.

It was obvious that Nick Lord's boast to have written AECs scripts was quite untrue. That Arthur was saying what he thought, and not what YTV thought its viewers wanted to hear, was painfully obvious at times. OK, we could have done without that idiotic introduction, but that was hardly Arthur's fault. (calling him the inventor of the communication satellite is rather like saying Leonardo da Vinci invented the helicopter) So, perhaps Clarke is not the universal expert that some would think, but he is a brilliant communicator, and one of the finest creative writers of our time.... Might I make three suggestions.

- (1) Read Arthur C Clarke's great masterpiece "Imperial Earth"
- (2) View some of the b... s... that American TV companies turn out on the theme.
- (3) Next time a TV company approaches you write out the proverb "one bitten twice shy" 100 times before doing anything!

NEWS :: The Birmingham Sunday Mercury for January 11, 18 & 25 had three fine double-page centre spreads on the UFO phenomenon. It covered the subject in some depth, including cases, theories and personalities (pro and sceptic) UFOCIS & SKYSCAN the two midlands groups were featured. A fine effort indeed from journalist Kate Faunce.

:: The next NUFON meeting/conference will hopefully be in April and be organised by MUFORA in Manchester. A theme is being considered but the most likely choice is Physical UFO phenomena... their causes and effects. MIGAP have also offered to stage a conference in the Autumn in Liverpool, but no theme has been proposed for this. Any ideas should be submitted for consideration by the planning committees for these events.

:: Do not forget the APRIL NORTHERN UFOLOGY theme on Window Areas and Ufocals. Do they exist? What are they? Send in your contributions.

NB Your editor will be out of contact in hospital from February 20 for a couple of weeks. This might cause a delay in the publication of the March newsletter. Please bear with us on this. Any urgent problems should, as in the past, be channelled via Peter Warrington in Manchester or Syd Henley in Nottingham.

ELSEWHERE THIS MONTH.... Bob Morrell has published the 1980 UFO abstracts (at 25 p from NUFOIS, excellent value as research material). It abstracts 121 articles from 1980 UK magazines and also contains an editorial which goes rather a long way over the top in slanging NUFON and the denigrating the personal integrity of your editor. Despite this unnecessary distraction the publication is of value.... MIGAPs MERSEY NEWS for February has local reports, review of the Liverpool meeting (see editorial), and articles including ball lightning, German ufology and spring-healed jack.... UFOSIS too have issued a news-sheet for January with sightings and latest news.... Finally, FUFORs latest issue of UFO INSIGHT is published (January 1981) with an interesting update on the international working party (set up at the 1979 BUFORA congress) which recently held its second meeting in Denmark (which FUFOR, it seems, attended).

Our great British institutions are perhaps both the subject of envy and mild amusement from some foreigners. Previously my ideas were those of an outsiders (stimulated by radio's top comedy show "Today in Westminster") I envisaged dodderly old men in the totally class centred and next to worthless House of Lords arguing (mild manneredly) merely to pass the time. Future-shaping events could not possibly happen there. When the earl of Clancarty brought into play a debate on UFOs in January 1979 it was just another silly session. No doubt the week after they discussed the motion that the moon was made out of Cheshire cheese!

Well, on December 2, I was lucky enough to see it from the inside, thanks to the kind invitation of Earl Clancarty to speak to the all-party UFO study group. This select body, formed after the 1979 debate, is still in its infancy and has made no impact as yet. Some doubt that it ever will. I knew I was following on from just two or three other ufologists from all over the world and so therefore felt a very considerable responsibility on my shoulders.

What did I find? Well the dodderly old men were there in abundance (plus a few who were suprisingly young and decidedly dishy). There was pomp and ceremony galore, fancy clothes, processions, archaic language and religious solemnity. However, overall there was respect. And I found to my surprise that the House was a dynamic organism which debated important issues and debated them well. I must admit that I now accept the reality that there is a place for the dodderly old men (and ladies now too) in the scheme of the scheme of things.

My actual talk was to a small group (of 12 to 15) earls, lords and MPs. Most of them I found keenly interested but rather naive. Afterwards a number of them thanked me for what was a frank "cards-on-the-table" discussion of the pros and cons of modern ufology. "That was the first time anyone has tried to be honest" said the Earl of Ilchester, and a newcomer said he was stimulated but not swayed either way (which, I told him, was the best position to be in). One grumpy old man started mumbling something and then stormed out! I felt a little better afterwards when I discovered he had yelled down Antonio Ribera and fallen asleep on Charles Bowen! The most interesting debate, however, was with Admiral Hill-Norton (once of the Ministry of Defence) who was trying to convince me that there was a major cover up that was vast in its extent!!!

The subject matter of my talk and some of the subsequent reaction deserves an article of its own, which I hope to make available to the literature, but I did try to be unemotive and unbiased, with intriguing results.

So I left the corridors of power in a bit of a dreamy state. I found it hard to believe that I had just met a friendly, smiling and very pleasant man who just 18 months before had been our prime minister (our own Jimmy C); or that I had just had tea (and later vodka and lime) with faces with which I was familiar and names which echoed in my memory. I had much to thank Lord Clancarty for. He had given me a day to remember, and his amiable enthusiasm had helped me through without too much nervous tension. I do not know if the all-party study group will achieve its aims and gain wider recognition for the UFO mystery amongst those in power but it will certainly have a darn good try. As for me... what next? ... "Yes, your majesty ... the palace at two... no, I love corgi's.... where's my diary... let me see ... yes, I think I'm free that day..."

THE SECRET OF HANGAR 18

Most of you cannot fail to have seen the TV and media barrage promoting the film HANGAR 18... "This is the truth"... "Explodes the UFO cover-up" and other such junk has been paraded about. Of course it is just a device to sell the film, but I expect a few people will not see it that way and read ALTERNATIVE THREE type connotations into it. Even one person at the House of Lords assured me that this new film (and CE3K before it) was part of an education programme to prepare us for the truth... well, maybe. I think I'll pass on that one.

As for the film itself it was mildly diverting. That's about the best I can say for it. The effects were, well 'OK', the plot was, well 'OK', as entertainment it was, well 'OK'. As ufology it was a none starter. The UFO did not even look like a UFO. The aliens looked like live actors (one of them blinked several times!) As in real life the UFO crashes in the desert (by chance) and all trace of it is carted off without anyone seeing it inside three hours (completely intact of course). Unlike real life they learn the secrets in a few days (we are supposed to have had one for thirty years really of course) whilst two astronauts (in a plot ripped off from the far superior film CAPRICORN ONE) chase after it, pursued of course by mib's (so named in the credits to the puzzlement, no doubt, of any none ufologists since they, like I, will have assumed they were CIA mem!) I will not reveal the 'big' ending, for those who have not seen it, but the fate which befalls HANGAR 18 is befitting. Oh, and if its the truth how come the Space Shuttle is up there in space

- 8049 July 10 (22.36) Atherstone, Wrks HAPI (F Phillips) Level C
A man out with his dog saw a white LITS circling a field for one minute before vanishing. No sound. Evaluation: Insufficient data
- 8051 July 23 (18.35) Hinckley, Leics HAPI (E Hall) Level C
A White LITS seen high on a steady straight trajectory heading NW. No sound. One male witness. Evaluation: Aircraft

MEDIUM DEFINITION

- 8050 July 13 (22.15) Twycross, Leics HAPI (G Hall) Level B
Two independantly located female witnesses observed a bright cigar with red and green flashing LITS circling a village and moving off to the south. A slight buzzing sound heard. Evaluation: Aircraft
- 8052 July 28 (18.10) Hinckley, Leics HAPI (G Hall) Level D
Graham Hall himself saw a kite like object pass slowly over his house revolving and giving off red and green colours. It looked large and metallic. At one point there was a droning noise. Evaluation: Insufficient data
- 8053 July 28 (afternoon) Groby, Leics CUFORO (M&G Rennocks) Level A
Hospital registrar and child patient saw golden sphere, size of 10p piece at arms length, over hospital. It moved NE at a steady rate for 30 seconds before vanishing. It also rotated on its axis and turned red then green before finally disappearing. No aircraft were in the area and the airport recorded nothing unusual on radar. Evaluation: UNKNOWN
- 8054 August 5 (am) Loughborough, Leics CUFORO (M&G Rennocks) Level B
A yellow object seen briefly at 25 degrees in the NE, which evaporated after 4/5 seconds. On investigation the moon was found to be in the same position but not reported by the witnesses. Evaluation: Moon
- 8056 Sept 13 (21.55) Hull, N Humberside G & M Birdsall Level C
Two separate reports which seem to tie in with case 8040 from Kirton, Lincs. One report was of a blue oval seen descending slowly over a golf course. The other was from independant witnesses in another part of Hull (at the same time) who saw a pink light trailing smoke which they took to be a flare. Police investigated that night but could find no causation for either sighting. Evaluation: Insuff
- 8057 November 2 (17.40) Ashby-de-la-zouch, Leics EMPRA (M Brown) Level A
A group of five children were witness to various stages of a sighting of an object which circled the village, remaining in view 15 minutes. It was a red cigar with flashing red, green, yellow and blue lights on it. It was reported as stationary at least on one occasion and white beams of light illuminating the ground were seen and may have been connected with the object. Extensive checks did not identify the source but Castle Donnington airport had several light aircraft airborne at the time and one may have been responsible. Evaluation: Aircraft

MULTI-WITNESS PHENOMENON OVER DERBYSHIRE Case 8055 August 31 1980 Level A

This summary is based on an extensive and well produced 75pp report, to be housed in the UFOIN files. It was prepared by Peter Ann, Les Hall & Syd Henley of NUFOIS.

The events concern the night of August 31 (generally between 00.30 and 00.50). It should be recalled that case 8037 (see Nov issue) occurred just over an hour later in Golborne, Gtr Manchester and concerned multiple witnesses to a spectacular unidentified sighting.

NUFOIS provide evidence in the report that three separate objects might have been seen, but the majority of the observations refer to an object moving SE - NW and described as like a hovercraft or a giant airship or a whale. Basically it was a large dark oval object which was seen as very low (only a few hundred feet) and silent (except for a faint buzzing) and surrounded by a mass of lights, red, green white and blue. It is this last colour which seems to deny an aircraft identification since, as NUFOIS discovered, blue lights are not allowed on aircraft. The sightings centred on the Ashbourne-Buxton area of Derbyshire and lasted about 10 minutes. It must be noted that this is virtually placing the object on a direct flightpath into Manchester airport (25 miles north-west).

MUFORA have reason to believe that this object might have been a quiet jet on a flight into Manchester, although this is probably not provable.

The reasons for this stem from data, as yet to be published by the group, which followed extensive investigation into local air traffic in an effort to explain a baffling series of similar sightings in Lancashire, which we had listed as unexplained for 2 years! It has recently been shown beyond reasonable doubt that the primary cause was a very quiet DC-9 jet on a regular night route performing antics that you would think unbelievable for a trained airline pilot (more of that anon!) Our investigator actually saw it himself (and the aircraft was so low it nearly hit him!) The description he gave (complete with blue lights..which are intense white strobe-type lights which look blue) was so similar to the Ashbourne object and several other recent unknowns (eg several in the Surrey area on a path into Heathrow) that MUFORA are reasonably convinced that their data will provide a reasonable explanation to these events.

It should also be noted that MUFORA case 78-214 (see NUN Apr 79) and PARASEARCH 78-239 (see NUN Sep 79) in Whalley Bridge, Derbyshire, and Holmes Chappel, Cheshire, may now be identifiable and should be treated as suspect. Both these sightings are extremely similar to the current one (and the Whalley Bridge one is describing the same kind of object in the same area moving in the same direction). At the moment however, we shall keep the UNKNOWN evaluation to the Ashbourne case, as afforded it by NUFOIS. Investigators may then make up their own minds when MUFORA publishes data.

TIN-HAT UFO IN LIVERPOOL Case 8048 June 23 1980 Level A MIGAP

Another tremendous report, magnificently prepared, which will go on file in the UFOIN system. John Morris is the author.

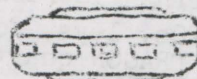
It concerns the sighting by two witnesses, Rosalind, (23) and her brother, Wayne, (15) who saw an object like two army tinplates stuck together with a row of lights and windows in their midst. It hovered for 2 minutes over waste ground and then rose slowly into the sky.

The 47pp report features everything conceivably relevant, including full witness transcripts, full details of all efforts to identify the source and much more.

ASHBOURNE UFO



LIVERPOOL UFO



The above two reports highlight a marvellous growing trend to produce first-class reports. A number of others are awaiting summary in NUN, including a full report on the Cumbrian CE4 with physical traces, extremely well investigated by NLUFOIG, and now just awaiting final trace analyses. Hopefully more of this next month. Indeed it would pay all investigators to see some of these efforts and compare their work with their colleagues. A visit to the HQ in Nottingham would not go amiss.

NORTHERN UFO GROUPS DIRECTORY... 1981 (Correct to February 1 1981)

SCOTLAND... As there is now a Scottish UFO Network, affiliated to NUFON, which coordinates all activity in the country it will be left to them to publish a directory. The coordination address for ScUFON is:- C: 1980

Arthur Lynch 75 Prestwick Court Ardler Dundee DD2 3SH

IRELAND IURC (Irish UFO Research Centre) (NUFON Affiliate) C: 1975

John Hind 19 Cairshill Avenue Belfast N.Ireland BT8 4NR

Loose association of north and south researchers. No present publications.

ENGLAND

A) Borders:

CHRYSLIS

(NUFON Affiliate) C: 1977

Christine Pickett 48 Britannia Place Dormanstown Redcar Cleveland
Tel: Redcar 479973 Open, but small, membership. No publications or regular meetings. Interested in leys, folklore & paranormal phenomena

NLUFOIG (North Lancs UFO Inv Group) (NUFON Affiliate) C: 1978

Gordon Barraclough 8 Beulah Avenue Morecambe Lancashire
Tel: Lancaster 60185 (Peter Massey) Membership approx 25, meet monthly in Lancaster (second Monday in month), interests in airships, leys & folklore

B) Central:

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SUFORS (Scunthorpe UFO Research Soc) (NUFON) C: 1972
Nigel Watson Westfield Cottage Crowle Bank Rd Althorpe S Humber DN17 3HZ
Tel: Scunthorpe 783454 Vety small group, no regular meetings, interests in
fortema, airships and contactees.

DIGAP (Direct Inv Group on Aerial Phenomena) (NUFON) C: 1957
Arthur Tomlinson 24 Bent Fold Dr Unsworth Bury Gtr Manchester BL9 8NG
Small group who meet irregularly in Manchester (Friday nights). Limited investig-
ation work in the south Lancashire area. One of the oldest existant UK groups.

MUFORA (Manchester UFO Research Ass) (NUFON) C: 1963
Peter Warrington 597 Mauldeth Rd West Chorlton Manchester M21 8SH
Tel: Padgate 824036 (Jenny Randles) Membership of 12 on selective basis. No open
membership, Meets monthly in Manchester. Investigates cases only. Has contacts with
Kodak, Marconi, the CAA and various Manchester University bodies for analysis work.

MIGAP (Merseyside Inv Group on Aerial Phen) (NUFON) C: 1979
Brian Fishwick 133 Hinckley Rd Islands Brow St Helens Msyaside WA1 8JX
Tel: SH 28705 28 senior members plus junior section. Bi-monthly magazine MURSEY
NEWS, meet monthly in Prescot, skywatches, plus research into leys, archaeology,
religion and generics in association with UFOs.

FUFOR (Federation UFO Research) (Non affiliate) C: 1977
Mark Tyrrell 277b West St Crewe Cheshire CW1 3HU
Tel: 582359 (Stephen Cleaver); Membership of 4 active as an investigative unit.
Has developed site investigation kits for all members. Publishes UFO INSIGHT
quarterly (available at £1.80 for 6 issues)

MAPIT (Manchester Aerial Phen Inv Team) (Non affiliate) C: 1973
David Rees 92 Hillcrest Rd Offerton Stockport Gt Mcr SK2 5SE
Loosely affiliated group based around irregular magazine SKYWATCH (available on
open sale from group). Attempting to organise a resources library.

c) Midlands:

LEMR (Lincolnshire Earth Mysteries Res) (NUFON) C: 1980
Andrew Pickering 16 Packhorse Lane, Swineshead, Boston, Lincs PE20 3JE
Researches UFOs, leys, folklore and the paranormal in the area. Publishes
LINCOLNSHIRE DRAGON quarterly (£2 for four issues)

NUFOIS (Nottingham UFO Inv Society) (NUFON) C: 1966
Les Hall 443 Meadow Lane Nottingham NG2 3GB
Tel: 250316 (sightings 874615) (files also on this number)
Has open membership with vetted inner core to 32. Operate HQ with darkroom, work-
shops, meeting room etc. Soil analysis and photo analysis equipment. All NUFON and
UFOIN files housed there. Publishes UFO RESEARCH REVIEW

UAPROL (UAP Res organisation of Leicester) (NUFON) C: 1977
John Barden 19 Coates Avenue New Park Estate Leicester
Tel: 311666 Large group with regular meetings. Operates a mobile investigation
van with full site analysis equipment and has a computer with programming in hand.

PARASEARCH (NUFON) C: 1978
Martin Keatman 31 Stuart Close North Walton Stone Staffs ST15 0JU
Tel: Stone 816934 Small team of active investigators relating UFO experiences
to other kinds of paranormal phenomena. Advisors in psychology and hypnosis.
Special interest in CE4 and contactees.

UFOSIS (UFO Studies & Investigation Services) (NUFON) C: 1975
Bob Taylor 731 Hagley Rd West Quinton Birmingham B32 1AJ
Moderate sized group which meets regularly in central Birmingham. Publishes
an irregular journal. Is also associated with the southern counterpart system
MAUFOG.

PLEASE KEEP THESE PAGES HANDY FOR REFERENCE DURING 1981

Amendments